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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 4-6, 21-22, and 27-57, and amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for handling a tubular, comprising:
a housing for receiving the tubular;
a plurality of chambers within the housing;
a plurality of gripping members disposed in the housing for gripping the tubular,
wherein each gripping member moveably mounts to one of the plurality of chambers;
and
a plurality of torque distributors disposed in each of the chambers the housing for
engaging the plurality of gripping members, wherein each of the plurality of torque
distributors has a contact surface and a load transfer surface, wherein the contact
surface is adapted to contact an outer surface of the gripping members and the load
transfer surface is adapted to transfer a force from the gripping members to an inner
surface of the chamber.
2. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the plurality of torque distributors prevents the plurality of gripping members from twisting as torque is applied to the tubular.
3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the load transfer
surface plurality of torque distributors comprises a pin having an arcuate surface on-one
side and the contact surface is a flat surface on-another.
- 4-6. (Cancelled)
7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the plurality of gripping members comprises a piston and cylinder assembly.

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8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the piston is attached to the housing and the cylinder is radially movable relative to the piston.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, further comprising an engagement member disposed on the piston and cylinder assembly.

10. (Original) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the engagement member is selected from the group consisting of a jaw, a die, and combinations thereof.

11. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the plurality of torque distributors prevents the plurality of gripping members from twisting.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the plurality of torque distributors are disposed parallel to an axis of the piston and cylinder assembly.

13. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein a bending force acting on the piston and cylinder assembly is distributed across the plurality of torque distributors.

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein six torque distributors guides each gripping member.

15. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for handling a tubular having a first portion and a second portion, comprising:

a frame;

a first gripping apparatus disposed on the frame;

a second gripping apparatus disposed on the frame, wherein each of the gripping apparatus includes:

a housing for receiving the tubular;

a plurality of chambers within the housing

a plurality of gripping members disposed in each of the chambers the
housing for gripping the tubular; and

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a plurality of torque distributors disposed in the housing for distributing forces acting on the plurality of gripping members, wherein each of the plurality of torque distributors has a contact surface and a load transfer surface, wherein the contact surface is adapted to contact an outer surface of the gripping members and the load transfer surface is adapted to transfer a force from the gripping members to an inner surface of the chamber.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the first gripping apparatus has torquing capability.

17. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the second gripping apparatus includes one or more torquing members for rotating the housing.

18. (Original) The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the one or more torquing members comprise a piston and cylinder assembly.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the plurality of torque distributors prevents the plurality of gripping members from twisting.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 19, wherein each of the plurality of torque distributors load transfer surface has an arcuate surface on one side and the contact surface has a flat surface on another.

21-22. (Cancelled)

23. (Original) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the plurality of gripping members comprises a piston and cylinder assembly.

24. (Original) The apparatus of claim 23, further comprising a tubular engagement member disposed on the piston and cylinder assembly.

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25. (Original) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the engagement member is selected from the group consisting of a jaw, a die, and combinations thereof.

26. (Original) The apparatus of claim 23, wherein the plurality of torque distributors prevents the plurality of gripping members from twisting.

27-57. (Cancelled)

Please add the following new claims:

58. (New) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the inner surface of each of the plurality of chambers have a plurality of recesses adapted to contact the load transfer surface of the plurality torque distributors.

59. (New) The apparatus of claim 58, wherein each of the recesses are arcuate.

60. (New) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein the inner surface of each of the plurality of chambers have a plurality of recesses adapted to contact the load transfer surface of the plurality torque distributors.

61. (New) The apparatus of claim 60, wherein each of the recesses are arcuate.

62. (New) The apparatus of claim 15, wherein each of the plurality of gripping members is moveably attached to the housing.

63. (New) A method of handling a tubular comprising:

gripping a tubular in a gripping apparatus, wherein the gripping apparatus comprises:

a housing;

a plurality of chambers within the housing;

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a plurality of gripping members coupled to the housing, and each gripping member within the one of the chambers;

a plurality of load distributors having a contact surface for engaging the gripping members and a load transfer surface for distributing a load from the gripping member to an inner surface of the chamber;

applying a torque to the tubular with a torquing member couplable to the housing;
and

preventing bending of the gripping members by transferring a torque load from the gripping members to the chamber through the load distributors.

64. (New) The method of claim 63, further comprising gripping a second tubular in a second housing of a second gripping apparatus.

65. (New) The method of claim 64, further comprising coupling the first tubular to the second tubular.

66. (New) The method of claim 63, further comprising transferring the torque load to the chamber in a plane substantially parallel to an axis of the gripping member.

67. (New) The method of claim 65, further comprising moving the gripping apparatus in a direction substantially parallel to an axis of the first tubular relative to the second gripping apparatus.

68. (New) The method of claim 63, further comprising ungripping the tubular.

69. (New) The method of claim 68, further comprising removing the tubular from the housing.

70. (New) The method of claim 69, further comprising uncoupling one of the plurality of gripping members from the housing.

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71. (New) The method of claim 70, further comprising removing the gripping member from the housing creating an empty chamber.

72. (New) The method of claim 71, further comprising coupling a new gripping member to the housing in the empty chamber.